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Buchanan urged to back war crimes office

By George Archibald
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Two major Jewish organizations declined yesterday to join an attack on White House communications director Patrick J. Buchanan for his past criticisms of the operations of a Justice Department office seeking to deport Nazi war criminals.

Instead, spokesmen for B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee said the groups hope to convert Mr. Buchanan into a supporter of the department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) and enlist his help to dispel public suspicion of the office's mission, particularly among immigrants from Eastern Europe.

Mr. Buchanan had criticized the OSI for co-operating with the KGB, the Soviet secret police, in obtaining information about Nazis who had emigrated to the United States after World War II.

"We dispute Mr. Buchanan's position," said Warren Eisenberg, public affairs director of B'nai B'rith. "We think it's wrong." He said the organization has written to Mr. Buchanan to "re-evaluate his views ... We'd like to have a positive relationship with him."

The work of OSI "needs support," Mr. Eisenberg said. "The exchange of information with the Soviets and East Bloc countries is vital to developing cases [against Nazi war criminals] in the United States," he added.

"It's a double-edged sword, to some extent," he said. But Nazi war crimes took place in Europe and "it's important to develop whatever sources we can for information" about people who "disguised their true record" to become U.S. citizens, he explained.

The American Jewish Committee is conducting a major effort to eliminate suspicion among East European emigres that OSI is con-

ducting "a witch hunt," said committee spokesman Gary Rubin.

The committee has investigated OSI's work and is convinced that prosecutions are "narrowly focused on Nazi war criminals," he said. OSI prosecutors are "scrupulously careful" in using evidence provided by the KGB, he asserted.

"We are in a diplomatic mode," Mr. Rubin said of the White House communications chief. "Our effort will be to educate him. Our primary concern is with the ethnic community that has been misinformed about the office and the mission it is attempting to carry out."

In a television interview with former OSI head Allan A. Ryan Jr., on Jan. 7, 1982, Mr. Buchanan had questioned why a separate \$2.3 million investigative unit within the Justice Department was needed to hunt Nazi war criminals.

"Why not abolish your office?" Mr. Buchanan inquired on the Channel 9 "After Hours" program. "And if people bring to you information about a Nazi war criminal in the country, prosecute them. Why have a whole office looking for them?"

In two syndicated newspaper columns, published in The Washington Times and more than a hundred other newspapers in 1983 and 1984, Mr. Buchanan also criticized the OSI's collaboration with the Soviet KGB "to run down Nazi war criminals who lied their way into the United States."

He asserted that OSI's reliance on Soviet "secret police" for evidence against post-World War II emigres from Soviet-bloc countries had denied "due process" to those accused and had resulted in several miscarriages of justice.

At the time, Assistant Attorney General Stephen S. Trott in a letter to The Washington Times disputed Mr. Buchanan's statements, accusing Mr. Buchanan of "sloppy journalism" and "preconceived ideological bias."

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